

Short Stay School for Norfolk

Attendance Policy Sept 2017

The Short Stay School for Norfolk is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued, safe and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year the school will set attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to encourage excellent attendance.

The importance of good attendance

The aim of this policy is to outline the importance of regular attendance at school in order to emphasise the impact it can have on pupils' academic progress.

Educational research indicates that good attendance is the single most important factor in educational success. At the SSSfN, we believe that the foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

If young people do not attend school regularly, they will experience difficulty in keeping up with their studies. In addition, they also miss out on the many activities and opportunities that are on offer at The Short Stay School for Norfolk to support and nurture their growth and development.

All key workers are required to promote good attendance and to monitor their forms for patterns of non-attendance and lateness. Pupils' attendance is regularly monitored and particularly if their attendance falls below 95% over a prolonged period. Then the school will contact parents to discuss how the matter can be improved. If a key worker suspects that a

pupil is deliberately not attending school, they should discuss the matter with the appropriate Assistant Lead who will then write to the parents using a standard letter. If the matter is not then resolved, the Assistant Lead should then arrange a meeting with the parents.

In addition to attendance, it is important to point out the need for pupils to be punctual. Pupils must be ready for their taxis in good time and do their best to be in school for the start of the school day at 9am. Late arrival to school and class is disruptive to the learning of other pupils. Persistent lateness will result in appropriate consequences being put in place.

Pupils who develop a pattern of poor attendance and lateness will be discussed with the county Attendance Officer who regularly holds attendance panel meetings. All attendance actions will focus primarily on supporting parents and carers in ensuring that their children attend school as much as possible.

Why is it important to attend school?

Government legislation entitled:

'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' sets out a much more inclusive approach to provide for the well-being and education of children. This requires effective working partnerships between parents, pupils and school.

The Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, is to ensure that they:

- Are healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

What can we ask parents/carers to do to help?

- If you suspect that your child is unhappy at school, please make contact with us as soon as possible via their Key Worker. This will alert us to any problems and help us to work with you towards resolving any issues.
- Ensure that your child comes to school regularly and arrives on time.
- Make sure that your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school.
- Ask well in advance if you need your child to miss school for any special reason and/or medical appointment.
- If at all possible, try to arrange appointments outside the school day.

- Avoid taking your child out of school during term time; this may result in a fixed penalty notice or further legal action.
- Make your child aware that their participation in some activities will be dependent upon your child meeting their attendance target of 95%.

Notifying the School of any Absence

All pupils are electronically registered during AM tutor time. However, there may be times when your child will be unable to attend school due to illness. In which case, please follow these guidelines.

On each day of any absence, please contact the local school base by telephone.

Rosebery
Locksley
Douglas Bader
Brooklands

If the school has not been notified of an absence by 9.45am, parents will automatically be contacted by the school's administrator. Parent/Carers are expected to call every day that their child is absent from school.

When your child returns to school, please ensure that they bring a note to confirm the reason for the absence, which should be handed to their Key Worker on their first day back. Please note that it is the school's decision to authorise an absence.

It is important that pupils take responsibility for this in order to ensure that attendance records are kept up to date and to avoid any unnecessary reminders having to be issued.

Holidays

Leave of absence (Government regulations issued September 2013 / ACE Sept. 2014):

- The Head Teacher shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless the Head Teacher considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- The Head Teacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if leave is granted.

- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised. (A Leave of Absence can only be booked after receiving written permission of the Head Teacher.)
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Norfolk County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.
- Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.
- All requests for absence must be made on application 'Leave of absence' form available from Reception.

What does the school do to reward good attendance?

The rewards of a good attendance record are:

- Secure learning.
- Strong peer relationships.
- Less 'catch up' work.
- Certificates for 100% attendance are awarded at the end of each term.
- Pupils who manage to complete the whole school year with full attendance will receive additional recognition for their achievement.
- Participation in school activities is dependent upon pupils having achieved their attendance target.
- Other rewards the school deems appropriate.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site including the Vocational Learning Hub

How attendance impacts on attainment:

Setting good patterns of attendance is vital. An attendance rate of 90% may sound good but it actually means that a pupil only attends for 4.5 out of every 5 school days. If a pupil has 90% attendance throughout their schooling, they will miss more than an entire year of school before they leave in year 11.

All pupils at The Short Stay School for Norfolk are therefore set an attendance target of 95%.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (including Child Protection). All our practice and activities must be consistent and in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures noted above. Any deviations from these policies and procedures should be brought to the attention of the Head teacher so that the matter can be addressed.

September 2017

Appendix 1 SSSfN Process for intervention in attendance matters

All parents/carers and pupils within the Short Stay School will be asked to read and sign the contract about attendance during the initial meeting with the school. In Compass and Earthsea, this should be completed early on during parent/carer meetings.

All parents/carers will be sent the legal information letter annually.

When there are concerns, each letter will be sent at appropriate times as necessary informing parents/carers of each stage of concern. It may not be necessary to go through each step and each case will be considered individually. At each stage, the pupil should also be spoken to and the offer made to meet parents/carers to discuss attendance.

Initial intervention – phone call every day to check reason for absence.

Stage 1 – Staff made aware that attendance is becoming an issue. Start attendance action process including review date in the pupil tracker. Timetable review and amendment as necessary. Key worker meets ASL/APL/ACL and to plan intervention. Parent alerted to concerns and informed of attendance action plan. Letter 1 sent.

Stage 2 – Letter 2 sent detailing absences that are unauthorised with no explanation and requesting evidence of or explanation for each. Parent contacted to inform that letter being sent and to invite in to discuss attendance.

Stage 3 – Letter 3 sent informing parent/carer of the concern around attendance and the need for improvement. Parent contacted to invite in to discuss attendance.

Stage 4 – Letter 4 informing parent/carer that a pupil is now considered a persistent absentee, with information about possible fines or legal action. AIO informed and asked to support with warning letter. Parent contacted to inform that letter being sent and to invite in to discuss attendance.

Stage 5 – Optional Letter 5 sent informing parent/carer that the school will only authorise absence if medical evidence is provided. Parent contacted to inform that letter being sent and to invite in to discuss attendance.

Stage 6 – Optional Letter 6 continued concern letter sent making the medical evidence needed more robust if case needs this. Parent invited to meet Base Leader and governor to discuss attendance.

Stage 7 – Consideration of Fast Track or fixed penalty notice procedure.

The school will also challenge parents/carers who the school believes may have taken family holidays during term time and persistent lateness for pupils.